THE LAST LAP

346 outside the House of Assembly (the Maulai kind of meeting-house that has superseded the Shiah mosque). As we neared Aliábád, riding through rich, flat, large fields, and past walled orchards we heard the local band burst into the familiar "welcome music." Presently we came to an open steeply sloping space near the half-ruined Sarkari Fort, and here was a whole party from the capital (four miles away), including Prince Ghazan Khán, the eldest son, and heir of the Mir,[1] and father of the two young princes who had met us earlier. The band changed the time to the "arrival tune," and we all walked on together to this bungalow. We passed a smart set of new
758 little buildings which are the dispensary, built by the Mir.
● 743 There is a resident Assistant Surgeon here, an Indian with a certain amount of medical training, who is able to render first aid and keeps a stock of simple drugs.

000 We found chairs set out in the rest-house verandah, and while we and Ghazan Khán talked of old times and the latest Hunza news, the rest of our train grouped themselves on the steps, and all the small boys of Aliábád gathered under the trees along the neighbouring watercourse to see any fun that might be going: a jolly, cheery, intelligent crowd they looked, not a moron or cretin among them; again in a marked contrast to Nagir, where both abound. Presently a tray with teapot was brought, and we thankfully turned to the "doctor" (the aforementioned compounder) whose gift it was. Tea was what we were just dying for after the hot climb; but when I poured it out I found it was a tepid mixture of tea, milk, sugar—and cinnamon. David and Ghazan Khán dealt bravely with it; I unobtrusively hid my cup.

643 [1] He succeeded our good friend his father, Sir Muhammad Nazim Khán, in July 1938.

2; Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

shingát breeds caution, not contempt. As we rode in we saw Ali Ausat at the nicely carved door of his house, rather grubby but pleased to see us, passed the miserable apology for a hospital which contrasts ill with the well-built one at Aliábád, though the two Mirs got the same grant from Government for the purpose of building them, and on past a fine, large, shallow pond. On our right was a steep green slope with jolly poplars and a lot of grass, and then we reached the polo-ground. Here the Mir came himself to meet us from the shelter of a roofed summer-house where he had been waiting. Another mile of almost perpendicular zigzag, which the ponies could only just manage, brought us to the familiar old polo-ground (now disused for play), with its lovely double line of poplars. This peculiarly steep and horrible approach is new, and the Mir is very proud of it. From the top there is a magnificent view with the pond below looking like a lake and the Mir's palace picturesquely perched on a steep hill-face with fine windows looking out not at any view but straight into the terraced hillside opposite. Mir Sikandar Khan looked shrunken and frail compared with ten years ago, but very brisk, and was apparently able to ride up his new road without a qualm.

He himself received us most hospitably and kindly, but his people serve him ill. Immediately on our arrival a shindy broke out with talk of grass- and fodder-shortage, though grass and fodder are plentiful in Nagir, and we found the rest-house dirty and unswept, bathroom and utensils uncared for, and a general atmosphere of grudging incompetence pervading it.

We dined with the Mir that evening and duly entertained him in return, while I paid a visit to the ladies and met the numerous little princes and princesses. The Queen of Nagir, a fine, handsome woman, not a day older than when I had last seen her eleven years ago, is a sister of Khan Sahib Mir Baz Khan of Yasin, and I was able to bring her first-hand news of her brother and his family, in which it is fair to say she did not seem over-interested. But she is a gracious motherly woman, and very intelligent—she even followed my Burushaski (Hunza variety) with ease. The brightest moments of my call were

526 They seldom ever score 9 goals in less than an hour and many times a game will last half a day. And [533] through all this gleeful yelling and shouting—everybody seems to scream like mad—the band is playing its martial tunes.

When a player scores a goal, he proceeds to pick up the ball and follow the same procedure as the Mir did when he started the action. He races madly down the field, screaming and yelling at the top of his lungs. With the scoring of every goal they change ends; that is, what was the first team's goal now becomes their opponent's goal.

[164] From Gilgit to Altit, whenever I saw someone who had a broken nose or some other definite sign of body injury, I would know even before inquiring, that it was gained in honor on the polo field.

[535] When at last one of the teams scored 9 goals and the game was finished, both teams took part in a dance. The winning team dances first and when they have completed their dance, the losing team do their stint. How they could have the strength and energy required to dance, after hours of unrelenting top-pitch physical activity is more than any Westerner can understand.

The horsemanship displayed at the polo matches beggars that seen at western rodeos. In fact, a Hunzan polo game makes the wildest of rodeos seem almost tame. When it comes to horsemanship, you'd have to go a long way to get anyone to beat these tough, hardy mountaineers.

[164] So furious was the game that I inquired if anyone was ever killed playing polo. The Mir replied that he had never heard of any fatalities from a polo game, but that on many occasions a player was incapacitated. I [743] felt that it would be a good idea if they could build their polo fields close to the hospital at Aliabad!

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

CHAPTER 44

Health

For Mr To Say that the Hunzans are the healthiest people of the world, which many authors and writers have claimed, would be sheer effrontery . . . mainly because I have not studied the health of all the peoples of the world, nor have I even met them. However, I do attest from what I have seen and observed, that the Hunzans are one of the healthiest people of the world.

To say that they are completely free from diseases or health problems is definitely not true. At the time when I visited Hunza there was a resident doctor located at Aliabad, where he was in charge of a 10-bed hospital. I conversed with him and questioned him daily during my stay and he answered my pressing questions with complete frankness and candor.

He is only a young man, a Pakistani, and his name is Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan, M.B., B.S. He is a handsome, capable, well educated doctor and is, in my

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

value to the people of Hunza? Let's examine them. 500

Let's start with pasteurization. Well, it would be very difficult to pasteurize in Hunza. First of all, they don't have the means of providing the required heat. Besides, they don't suffer from any conditions which pasteurization would cure—if it does cure anything. 744

How about hospitalization? Well, they have a comparatively new, modern hospital in Aliabad, but the people don't use it very much. They distrust the hospital and they distrust the doctor, even though he is a fine capable fellow. Besides, I did not notice, particularly, any sick or ailing people sitting around, waiting for a hospital bed. 743

Then how about inoculations? To begin with, what would you inoculate them against? They don't seem to have many, if any, of our diseases. Then, too, there are no inoculations against cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and such, anyway. Oh, yes . . . besides, these diseases have never been known in Hunza . . . not even poliomyelitis. 751 164

The Mir has a huge medicine chest that was given to him by the German expedition, which was stationed across the river in Nagir. Yes, it did prove most useful —for it helped a man get well. However, I must admit rather dejectedly that the man the medicine chest helped was my companion and not a citizen of Hunza. 757 177 123

They could use a dentist and right here you have struck gold! However, it would be most difficult to get a dentist to set up shop in Hunza, unless he were given room in the Mir's residence, for that's the only place where electric power is provided . . . unless the dentist didn't mind going back to the old days when the old foot pedal was used for power. 759 164

But let's be realistic about it! Wouldn't it be much better to give the people of Hunza back their old [263]

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burumbo AV7
Hunza
[P. 41-B]

beliefs about "the Healthy Hunzas."

Altogether, I was able to treat 5,680 medical cases—the country had no other dispensary—during my stay in Hunza. My daily group of patients did not suffer from many of the diseases common to our civilization. There were no true neurotics; no cases of stomach ulcers, appendicitis, or gout; only one case of cerebral hemorrhage, and but four cardiac cases. The few bad hearts had been damaged either by malarial anemia or by overexertion at high altitudes, as was the case with one man who had carried the Mir's piano on his back up twenty miles of mountain trail. On the other hand, my Hunza patients did have malaria. They also had at least two kinds of intestinal worms, and to see for the first time a man with *Ascaris*